POLAND: Widespread Sentiment for General Strike

The apparent support of Polish workers for a major demonstration of opposition raises the chances for renewed violence this month. [redacted]

An official of Solidarity's Temporary Coordinating Committee told [redacted] yesterday the union leadership believes it has no choice but to call for 15 days of "heightened union visibility," culminating in a peaceful mass demonstration against the regime on 31 August. He said the underground leaders believe they are caught between Premier Jaruzelski's tough stand and the growing antiregime sentiment among workers and that they have to respond or risk losing their credibility. [redacted]

Union sources report recent polls taken in many factories show overwhelming support for an immediate, nationwide strike. Workers' committees in Gdansk reportedly have already agreed to a work stoppage and simply are waiting for the "right weekend." Union officials believe they would have to support such action. [redacted]

The union official indicated, however, that the leadership is not now prepared for the showdown with authorities a strike is likely to provoke. A police source [redacted] the militia is "gleefully" waiting for a clash. [redacted]

Comment: Worker sentiment for a show of defiance evidently is running far ahead of the more cautious and realistic Solidarity leadership. Union leaders will try to contain the mood of the workers and will try to postpone major strike action until at least next month. Nevertheless, some violence during the planned protest activity for this month will be almost unavoidable because of the radical attitudes of some union activists and the likelihood of at least some provocation from police. [redacted]

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